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INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

Statement submitted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

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The following Declaration was adopted by consensus by the participants in the

PARLIAMENTARIANS' DAY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

which was organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union* on the premises of the Italian Senate in Rome on 15 November 1996.

* On 1 June 1997, National Parliaments of the following 138 sovereign States were represented in the Inter-Parliamentary Union: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

DECLARATION

ADOPTED AT THE PARLIAMENTARIANS' DAY HELD ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

(Rome, 15 November 1996)

We, the parliamentarians gathered together in Rome on 15 November 1996 for a meeting organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the occasion of the World Food Summit and at the invitation of the Italian Parliament, declare the following:

1. We express our keen concern at a situation where close to 800 million people throughout the world, in particular in the developing countries, suffer from chronic undernutrition. It is intolerable that almost 200 million children under five suffer from protein and energy deficiencies threatening their future, most often irremediably. Unless strong measures are taken urgently, hunger and food insecurity will persist and may even worsen dramatically in some regions of the world. The problem manifests itself on a global scale, even in some of the most affluent societies. This situation is an affront to human dignity, a social disease and a threat to democracy.

2. We recognize that food insecurity - for families, regions and nations alike - has many interdependent physical, geographical, political, economic and social causes. These affect economic development and have an impact on the income of individuals and entire nations alike, although the agricultural sector is particularly concerned. In tracing the root causes of food insecurity, we place particular emphasis on poverty, which must be eradicated if the proclaimed goal of "food for all" is to be attained.

3. Whereas peace, social justice, democracy and transparent and responsible governance are all preconditions for a nation's sustained economic and social development, increasing the efficiency of agricultural and food production is the key to ensuring an adequate food supply, which should be maintained at affordable prices world-wide, but especially in low-income, food-deficit countries.

4. Food production must be environmentally friendly. To this end, there is a need to widen public and private investment in the development of appropriate technologies and enhance the effectiveness of the transfer of such technologies to rural populations via training and outreach programmes.

5. Physical constraints on agricultural production, such as lack of water control, insecure input distribution circuits and limited access to markets, should be eliminated. Economic and social policies conducive to the creation of a favourable environment for agricultural production should be adopted, notably to ensure that all farmers and in particular rural women and young people enjoy access to know-how and means of production, including land and credit. Efficient mechanisms for ensuring the food security of the population will have to be implemented, in particular as regards access to adequate food for the poorest and the constitution of sufficient reserves.

6. Attainment of food security requires sustained action at the international level in a spirit of co-operation and solidarity between nations, with due consideration given to differences between their levels of development. Such action should be aimed at the promotion of trade and enhancement of trade liberalization, realized on equitable terms, at the development of environmentally sound new technologies, protection of the planet's natural resources - in particular by promoting renewable energy and using biodiversity, at making genetic resources accessible in such a way as to guarantee the inalienable rights of the depositing nations, as well as at advancement of technical co-operation and the exchange of information. The contradiction between the needs of economic development *per se* and the imperative of making this development sustainable necessitates increased international assistance.

7. Whereas official development assistance - be it bilateral or multilateral - should be increased and restructured to take account of the needs of the agricultural sector, private investment in this sector should be likewise encouraged. Donors and financing agencies need to adopt a more radical approach towards improving the quality of development proposals that will make it possible to reverse the current downward trend of official development assistance. The amount of food aid to developing countries should be made sufficient to meet their emergency needs and be supplemented by assistance programmes which are focused on rehabilitation of the agricultural sector and are linked with social protection schemes ensuring adequate food for the poorest.

8. Reaffirming the right of all human beings to enjoy an adequate, healthy and well-balanced diet, we

   - ***endorse*** the relevant resolutions recently approved by the IPU and most particularly the resolution adopted by the 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Beijing on 20 September 1996 on "Policies and strategies to ensure the right to food in this time of globalization of the economy and trade liberalization";

   - ***support*** the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Food Summit;

   - ***support*** the FAO Special Programme for food security in low-income, food-deficit countries, and *urge* the international community, in particular financing bodies, to associate themselves therewith;

   - ***endorse*** the "Food for All" campaign proposed by the FAO with a view to mobilizing all components of civil society in the World Food Summit follow-up, and ***undertake*** to participate fully therein as parliamentarians.

9. We ***commit*** ourselves to the task of promoting the implementation of the Summit's Plan of Action within our respective parliaments. More particularly, we undertake to:

   - ensure that sectors essential to food security, especially the agricultural sector, receive greater priority in the allocation of public funds, including official development assistance, and to see to it that these funds are used as effectively as possible;

- ensure that activities essential to food security, in particular agricultural activities, enjoy a legislative framework which is conducive to their development in an environmentally friendly manner and which guarantees that all enjoy access to the means of production, to training and information, and to an adequate, healthy and balanced diet;

- encourage our governments to adopt economic and social policies that are in full conformity with the principles and commitments of the World Food Summit;

- promote international co-operation in all forms, including the signing of international agreements, in particular with regard to international trade and access to technologies.

10. We ***urge*** the participants in the World Food Summit to give adequate attention to the present Declaration, we ***undertake*** ourselves to promote its ideas within our respective legislatures and ***request*** the Inter-Parliamentary Union to make it widely known in the world's parliaments and to set up, in co-operation with FAO, a mechanism to monitor the implementation, at parliamentary level, of the commitments taken in Rome.